AN

K. G., P., and K., F.

ADDRESS, &c.

CANTERBURY:

PRINTED BY THOMAS SMITH.

M,DCC,LXXXIV.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

Society of Baptized Believers,

MEETING IN THE

Black Friars, CANTERBURY.

Chriſtian Friends,

NOT having opportunity perſonally to viſit you ſo often as we wiſh, and being concerned for your immortal welfare, we beſeech you to ſuffer the word of exhortation.—Permit our advice in matters of the higheſt moment to have place in your hearts. Nothing but a ſolicitude for your ſouls good, induces us to give, and that ſhould prevail with you cordially to receive the matters of inſtruction we wiſh to impart.

In the firſt place, we beſeech you attentively to conſider the great importance of religion. It is property, the beſt of property.

Though all things elſe fail, the pleaſures of this remain. The choice of it is a good one, equally beneficial to the poſſeſſor, whether young or old, whether in circumſtances adverſe or proſperous.

Remember then the one thing needful. Think on things ſerious and important. It is the language of an infallible and glorious inſtructor, *Seek firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, and all other things ſhall be added unto you.*

In religion content not yourſelves with the form only. Strive for its reality. Remember the tree muſt be made good. You muſt be born of God. There muſt be a paſſing from death unto life. A renewing in the ſpirit of your mind. And, convinced that the good work is begun in you, ſeek for grace, and adopt the means that it may be carried forward to the day of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

To this important end, our advice is, that you conſtantly read the word of God. Read it reverently. Read it attentively. Read it privately, and in your families. Explain it to them, and make application of it to their ſouls. Let it be a ſubject matter of your continual meditation.—Happy is it for you, that you have the Bible in your houſes. It is of ineſtimable value. It is a treaſure of more worth than worlds. Oh prize it—improve

prove it diligently—with ardour lay hold on the words of eternal life.

Be attentive, not only to reading the word of God, but to all the means of grace. Forget not the aſſembling yourſelves together. Six days thou mayeſt labour. And how hard is it that the ſeventh, the day of the Lord, ſhould be ſpent in things vain and trifling. How ſmall muſt be our regard to God, to things ſacred and important, if we let matters of the leaſt moment prevent our attendance upon public worſhip, upon matters that are of eternal concern.

Means are neceſſary to obtain the end. If with ſincerity you ſeek God, you will find him. Let not then the means of grace be neglected. Attend upon public worſhip. Neglect not a recollection of a Saviour's love, in the appointed ordinance of his houſe. Attend upon the other means in the ſociety, adapted to nurture religion in the ſoul. Let means, the more open and public, be ſupported by your preſence, your ſerious attention and zeal; and, at the ſame time, be mindful of the uſeful, the neceſſary, the private duties of the cloſet.

Retire then from the world. Retire to commune with God and your own hearts. Enter into your cloſet, and ſhut the door. Pray to him who ſeeth in ſecret. Unboſom your hearts, open your conſciences, make known your requeſts.

Pray with the ſpirit of ſupplication. God will hear, he will accept, he will relieve and ſupply, as need requires, or as unerring wiſdom ſhall direct.

This is an important duty. Apoſtolick language is, *Pray without ceaſing*. Chriſt ſays, *Enter into thy cloſet*, &c. This then is part of Chriſtianity. Can we be Chriſtians without it? No. It cannot be. Private prayer is the preſervative of life in the ſoul. It keeps from evils innumerable. Seeing then its importance, neglect not its practice.

Beſides, this is not only a duty, but a privilege that leads to comfort and pleaſure. Here the mind is unburdened. Its griefs are opened to the great friend, the compaſſionate and faithful father, whoſe promiſe is, that he will do more abundantly for us, than we are able either to aſk or think. What gladneſs then is transfuſed through the ſoul! What exhilerating thoughts poſſeſs it! Well might Dr. Young ſay, "He that has never prayed, can never conceive; and he that has prayed as he ought, can never forget how much is to be gained by prayer."

Commune then with God, and with your own hearts alſo. Enter deeply. Weigh impartially. For this reaſon make a ſcrutiny the moſt minute, becauſe this is one of thoſe Chriſtian duties that are moſt important.

Conſider then how accounts ſtand between God and your own ſouls. Have you

doubts? Have you fears? Upon what are they founded? Examine the matter with the moſt attentive concern. Search deeply, that you may ſee the worſt of your ſtate. And remember this, that God is merciful, and we have an advocate with him. If you repent, if you amend, if you with earneſt ſolicitude ſeek, according to divine appointment, the mercy of God, the favour of the higheſt ſhall be your portion.

Perhaps you have no doubt of God's favour. Of ſome it is ſaid, *They ſpeak peace when there is no peace.* This may be your caſe. Make enquiry then as to the foundation of your hopes. See that they are well grounded. See that they have ſcripture countenance. Oh Friends! this is an important enquiry. Hopes falſly founded, though they may ſoothe and flatter, yet in the end they deceive and ruin. The hail and ſtorm will come, and the refuge of lies ſhall be ſwept away. Thouſands and tens of thouſands, *ſeemingly* ſupported by falſe hopes of heaven, will be plunged into hell.

The ſtorm, the tempeſt, the hail and floods muſt be provided againſt. But, how is the houſe to ſtand? How ſhall it be ſet upon a rock? What will give it, amidſt the ſhocks to which it is expoſed, an abiding permanency? Why, the doing God's will, the keeping his commands. The man that

does this, builds ſo as never to be overthrown.

But here may be deception. We may imagine what is not. Partiality may blind. Guard then againſt it. Let it be the matter of your prayer, the ſcope of your endeavour, without reſerve to do your beſt; and when you have done all in your power with confidence, leave the event to the mercy of God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Of the people of God it is ſaid, "They go from ſtrength to ſtrength." They are to grow in grace—they are to be preſſing forward—to be growing towards the perfect ſtature of manhood in Chriſt Jeſus. How is this matter with you? What are your advances? Are you increaſing in divine things? Does the life of Jeſus more and more appear in you? Or is it the reverſe? Seriouſly propoſe theſe queſtions to your own ſouls, and act accordingly.

It is ſaid, The tree is known by its fruits. You profeſs to be the branches of Chriſt. Do you bear fruit? What is your fruit? Is it the fruit of holineſs? Is it fruit correſponding with the Chriſtian character? Appeal to your own hearts. And act in ſuch a manner, that if others ſhould appeal to your outward conduct, they may diſcover you to poſſeſs the character of the children of God, being zealous of holineſs and good works.

Your credit in the world, as profeſſors of Chriſtianity, ought by you to be regarded. Religion ſuffers much in its outward credit, by the irregularities of its profeſſors. By an unbecoming conduct you would cauſe the truth to be evil ſpoken of, and do it an irreparable injury. You would betray the very cauſe you profeſs to ſupport.

Walk then in prudence and wiſdom. See that your lights are burning. Adorn, by an unblameable converſation, the doctrine of your dear Redeemer. Stain not your Chriſtian character by the pollutions of the world. Walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as the wiſe of God, redeeming the time becauſe the days are evil.

In all reſpects, then, deport yourſelves well in life. Let your conduct be noted for temperance and ſobriety. Be punctual and honeſt in all your dealings. Speak the truth. Support your character with reputation, that if any are diſpoſed to ſpeak evil of you, they may have cauſe to be aſhamed.

We beſeech you to guard againſt the idle modes, and the profuſe prodigality of a ſenſual age. Heavy are the incumbrances that ſuch conduct produces. Act then with care and œconomy. Be induſtrious. Be frugal. Prudently provide againſt the diſtreſſing exigencies of life. Lay up in ſtore, with the view that you may not be burdenſome to others,

others, and that you may have to give to him that needeth.

As we would wiſh you well to ſupport your own, ſo we beg you not to deſtroy the character of others. Guard well thy tongue. Speak evil of no man. Neither give encouragement to them that are thus diſpoſed. According to the old proverb, "The receiver is as bad as the thief." Rule well your own ſpirits, and let your tongues be under proper government. The tongue is a little member, but boaſteth great things. It is given by God to be the glory and bleſſing; guard then againſt the turning it to be, the ſhame and curſe of human nature.

Suſtain a good character, not only in the world, but in the church of Chriſt. Reſpect the miniſters of the Goſpel. Eſteem them for their works ſake. Give them all due encouragement. Do not increaſe, but endeavour to remove their difficulties. Do not make ſtraight paths crooked; but let it be your ſtudy and aim to make crooked paths ſtraight, and rough places ſmooth. Pray for them. And pray for the word, that it may have free courſe, and that God may be glorified.

Hold uſeful characters in reputation. Lend a concurring hand to the important concerns of religion. In buſineſs of this kind duty calls, and but few excuſes can exempt you. Of miniſters it is ſaid, "They

are

are labourers with God:" and of you, the people, that "Ye are God's huſbandry."

Fill up your ſtations in the church of Chriſt. Be zealous. Be uniformly ſteady. If you cannot do what you wiſh, do what you can. The ſmalleſt mite thrown into the treaſury, contributes to enrich it; and what is more animating than this? it meets with the acceptance and approbation of God.

Can you hide your talents in the earth; or wrap them up in a napkin? The diſciples of Chriſt are members one of another. The difficulties of individuals, and their wants, are many. Feel for them. Alleviate their ſorrows. Support their joys. Speak the word of wiſdom in ſeaſon. Cultivate ſuch diſpoſitions, as that doing good to others, may increaſe your own happineſs.

As members of Chriſt live in love. God is love. Chriſt bears the image of his father. The diſciple ought to have that of his maſter. Love then as brethren. Be courteous, affable, and condeſcending. Forgive one another. Exerciſe candour and Chriſtian charity. Remember, he only that is without ſin is to caſt the firſt ſtone.

Have a ſolicitous concern for the welfare of your brethren. Give them advice. Seek their intereſt, temporal and ſpiritual. In a word, be ye the people of God, thoroughly furniſhed to every good word and work.

We

We intreat you who are maſters of families, to make your houſes nurſeries of piety. Awful indeed is the declaration that God makes, He will pour out his fury on the families that call not on his name. Maintain then family worſhip. Regard with Chriſtian care all thoſe that by divine Providence are committed to your charge. Give to them good advice. Enforce it by good example. Guard againſt pernicious cuſtoms. Reſolve with Joſhua, that, as far as ability will carry, or prudence permit, both you and your houſe will ſerve the Lord.

Permit us to addreſs ourſelves to the aged amongſt you.—Many are the years you have lived; many the dangers you have eſcaped. How oft has ſickneſs aſſaulted? You may have been near the verge of eternity. Have theſe matters been attentively laid to heart? Do you poſſeſs an habitual ſenſe of what you are, and whither you are going? Nature cannot hold long. How many juniors are gone before. Perhaps ſome of your own offspring. How ought ſerious thought to poſſeſs your ſouls! But a little while, and you are no more. Be prepared. You are on the precipice. Soon, this night perhaps, you may breathe your laſt.

You of middle age, whoſe ſun is in its meridian. What is your life, your character, your thoughts, and your employ? Are you reſpectable in ſociety? Does the ſtature

of

of the manhood of Chriſt appear in you? Is your uſeful influence ſeen and felt? Are you, as you ought to be, trees of righteouſneſs, bearing much fruit in the garden of God?

We cannot be unmindful of our young friends. We rejoice to ſee the life of Chriſt formed in your ſouls. We are animated to ſee your zeal and ardor of piety. Go on your way rejoicing. You have God's promiſe, *He that ſeeks me early, ſhall find me.* Brave the difficulties, and nobly bear with the taunts to which in life you may be expoſed, for the ſake of a good conſcience. He is faithful that has promiſed. And none, truſting in him, ſhall be confounded.

We cannot but be particular in our addreſs to you, the young men of this ſociety. With pleaſure we behold your attention to divine things. Your language to one another ſeems to be, Let us go to the houſe of God in company. It is this gives us comfort. And when in your evening, ſocial meetings, we hear you recite the matter of our ſermons in your prayers to Almighty God, begging that our labour may not be in vain, who can tell the joys we feel, the comforts we experience? It makes glad our hearts. It gives refreſhment after the labours of the day. We then know that you remember, that you think on the word that has been delivered unto you.

Go

Go on then in the ways of Godlineſs. Encourage one another. Strive together for the faith of the Goſpel. Stir up the gifts that are within you. Be zealous; at the ſame time be modeſt; and pay ſuitable deference to ſuperior judgments. And in all your ſpiritual exerciſes, let your views be the building one another up, and the real edification of the church of Chriſt.

Fellow Chriſtians, ye, the diſciples of Chriſt, who are under our care, receive this our ſerious addreſs. Our many engagements in life prevents our perſonally viſiting of you ſo often as we could wiſh. But we wiſh your welfare. We deſire your ſouls good. We ſeek not yours, but you. Accept this token of our love. Read it more than once. Our wiſh is, that you may be our crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Need we to urge motives to excite your regard? Ought not motives ſufficient to dwell in your own breaſts? Do you love God? That God, who has created, who has preſerved, and who has bleſſed and enriched you with his bounties? Do you love that Jeſus, who has ſuffered—painfully ſuffered on the croſs for you? Ought not theſe, as motives, to ſtimilate? Can they be reſiſted? Yes, they can. But God forbid that love ſo wonderous, ſhould fail of efficacy in your precious ſouls.

Remember

Remember the character you profeſs to bear. Ye are the children, for ye are born of God. Ye are the profeſſed diſciples of Chriſt. Degrade not your high extraction. Debaſe not your noble birth. But by circumſpect, by ſuitable, by virtuous and Chriſtian conduct, ſupport that dignity of name ye make profeſſion of.

Do you love your own ſouls? Is the happineſs of them, in your eſtimation, of more worth than kingdoms? For your own ſakes then, let our requeſts be attended to. Pay regard to what we ſay. Suffer tender admonition to have place in your hearts. Strive to poſſeſs the grace of life. See that your lamps be trimmed, and your veſſels filled with oil. Prepare for your Maſter's coming. And God, of his infinite mercy grant, that, finally, an entrance may be adminiſtered unto you into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

Which is the prayer of your ſervants, for JESUS' SAKE,

P. C.

S. K.

1 AU59